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the cross probably was another figure, with a sponge on a reed.

“No. 14.—A cross partly restored from fragment on the church wall of Kirk Michael. Along the broken edge is the inscription—‘Suak raiste krasthana aft rumur
. . . al.’ . . . Suak erected this cross to Rumun. It is probably of the same age as No. 3.”

Dr. Petrie made some observations on Mr. Cumming’s communication.

The Rev. Dr. Todd read the following letter from J. O. Westwood, Esq., on the importance of making a collection of rubbings of the inscribed stones of Ireland.

“*Hammersmith, 6th April, 1854.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—During my visit to Dublin, last autumn, I was greatly grieved to learn that many of the curious inscribed and carved stones of Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, and other localities, of which descriptions and figures (more or less perfect) had been published, have, within the last few years, been entirely destroyed, without any further record being preserved of them whereby doubts which might arise respecting the correctness of the descriptions or figures might be solved.

“Now, it appears to me that it is one of the especial offices of the Royal Irish Academy to rescue, from absolute or partial oblivion, the class of monuments to which I allude; and I know of no more effectual mode of doing so than to form as complete a collection of rubbings of these stones as possible. Of the Ogham stones, I believe, a complete collection of rubbings has been formed by the Rev. Charles Graves, which, I trust, may ultimately be deposited in the Academy’s collection; but the formation of a series of the inscribed and carved stones is a far more extensive matter, and one which requires a certain amount of organization. It appears to me, that the Society would be acting most beneficially towards this end,—

first, by making as extensively known as possible the simplest means of making rubbings of such kind of monuments ; and second, by employing some competent person, for a certain period, in visiting the *old* localities, and making such rubbings ; or by issuing printed instructions to the incumbents of the outlying districts, setting forth the wants of the Academy, and the means of supplying them in this respect. From my own practice I am inclined to consider, that the old plan of heel-ball and cartridge paper is not the best which can be adopted for the process. I have myself found that the powdered black lead used for cleaning grates, &c., used with a hard leather rubber (an old glove stuffed with tow or hay will make an excellent substitute), is more effectual for producing a representation of the rough surface of stones, especially when rubbed upon common cap paper, such as is sold for lapping up grocer's parcels, &c. A still simpler process has been adopted by Mr. O'Neill, and as it can be employed in cases where the black lead and leather ball are not at hand, it is worthy of being recorded. Mr. O'Neill simply uses a ball of grass, which must, however, not be wet nor too juicy, and the paper must not be thin or porous, as the moisture of the grass brought out by the friction in making the rubbings would, of course, rub holes in the paper.

“ Considering, as I do, a collection of these rubbings of very great value, as enabling us to correct the representations of such stones which have already been published, and as forming an unimpeachable collection of figures of the monuments themselves, I hope you will use your influence with the Academy in undertaking the commencement of a systematic collection of these rubbings. I have myself done so with the carved and inscribed stones of Wales to a very considerable extent, and have also, whenever occasion offered, made rubbings of the more deeply carved crosses, although my rubbings show only the highest portion of the sculpture, giving, of course, no idea of the depth of the relieve. Still, I thus obtain a general idea

of the size of the cross, and the distribution of the figures carved on it, which I have also found extremely useful in testing and correcting drawings made by the eye, of the objects in question. During the Great Dublin Exhibition, I thus formed rubbings of several of the crosses, and casts of crosses, exhibited in the central avenue, and in doing so I had occasion to examine very carefully the sculpture upon the smaller of the two great crosses of Monasterboice, which enables me to correct the description of it given by Mr. J. D. Chambers in the "Ecclesiologist" for October, 1848, and at the same time to give an explanation of one of the figures which appears to have been hitherto unnoticed. Our Lord is represented in the centre of the east side of this cross, not seated on His throne of judgment, but standing erect with a cross in the left hand, and a sceptre, with a double scroll at the top, in His right hand. On the arm of the cross to His right-hand side is represented a number of figures approaching Him (according to the words, 'Come ye blessed')—whilst on His left hand, a number of figures are driven from His presence—('Depart ye wicked')—by a fiend armed with a three-pronged fork, and by another figure who holds a book, and kneels on one knee, kicking the figure in front of him with the other leg. Between these two fiends is represented a short, squat figure, with outstretched limbs, which appears to me to be intended as a representation of one of those singular sculptures termed 'shéela na gigs,' to which it bears a perfect resemblance, and which is here represented in its appropriate position, supposing it a personification of vice. Beneath the feet of our Saviour is a compartment occupied by a representation of St. Michael weighing, in a huge pair of scales, a smaller figure, the balance preponderating in his favour; but beneath the scales lies the fiend, who is endeavouring to pull down the lighter scale—a mode of representing the weighing of souls, common in mediæval illuminations, which Mr. Chambers has incorrectly described. Immediately beneath this group the Adoration of the Magi is

represented, which I here notice, as Mr. Chambers says that amongst the designs on the crosses ‘there does not appear the ordinary representation of the Blessed Virgin with the Holy Child in her arms, nor, we believe, is it to be found in Ireland.’ On several of the crosses also, as that at Moore Abbey, is the flight into Egypt represented, the Blessed Virgin holding the Child in her arms, as usual. Another group of figures common on the Irish crosses appears to me also to have been mistaken, as to its design, by Mr. Chambers. I allude to that of a figure standing with several animals on each side, from head to foot, ready to tear him. Mr. Chambers considers this to represent our Saviour attacked by fierce wolves or dogs—(‘Many dogs came about me, they gape upon me as a roaring lion.’) It appears to me to be rather intended for a representation of Daniel in the lion’s den.

“I remain, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

“JNO. O. WESTWOOD.

“*The Rev. Dr. Todd.*”

Sir W. R. Hamilton communicated extracts from two letters which he had lately received on the subject of the last bright comet, from Mr. Andrew Graham, Astronomical Assistant in the Observatory of E. J. Cooper, Esq., at Markree, and discoverer of the planet Metis :—

“*Markree Observatory, Collooney,*

“*28th April, 1854.*

“Your observations of the comet have come to hand to-day. They will be to me valuable, as I hope to find leisure for further researches on the orbit. Last night was cloudy, and, having made some previous preparations, I was tempted to obtain a second approximation to the elements. At half an hour past midnight I obtained a very satisfactory verification. The observations selected were those made at Markree, March 30th, and April 15th, and at Paris, April 7th, viz. :—